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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON UNCHR RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
IN CUBA, APRIL 6, 2004

1. Op-Ed by regular columnist Juan Ramon Martinez in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 4/6 entitled "Why do you offend us Presi Maduro?" I'm more surprised than Oswaldo Ramos Soto (National Party) and more indignant than Omar Cerna (Liberal) because of the position of subordination that Honduras has shown toward the U.S. objectives in Cuba.

"It is not a matter of principles nor a fight in favor of democracy, neither, a matter of defending Cuba's style or of government not to celebrate inclination of Castro to maintain power".

"If Honduras has decided as a sovereign power to obligate Cuba to respect the human rights of its citizens - by now, all us would be supporting the government's decision, but things are different. According to the information, not a single country of the hemisphere accepted President Bush's order"

"Presi' Maduro was urgently called by Powell who ordered him to do it so - neither the President of El Salvador who was Bush's nominee for the OAS wanted to take such an embarrassing position. `The Presi' of Honduras, as expected, agreed in tabling the resolution with enough knowledge of the risks of opinions that he has to undertake; but for sure, this task would let him have access to the millennium account"

2. Op-ed by regular collaborator Victor Manuel Ramos in San Pedro Sula-based liberal "Tiempo" on 4/6 entitled: "Oil street lamp" Our governments again, are protagonist in an action that is hundred percent against the thought and feelings of the Hondurans"

"It is interesting to know that this resolution tabled to the UNCHR has been written in Washington, and not precisely in the Honduran Embassy in that country but in the offices of the North American government. The Honduran Foreign Affairs Minister looks more as a north American employee than Honduran- according to his statements and his perception, he thinks we all are stupid and do not know the truth"

3. National Television news program Telenoticias on April 5th carried an interview with former Foreign Minister Carlos Lopez Contreras who is now an advisor of the current Foreign Minister in which he said: "The United Nations Commission on Human rights has had this issue on its agenda for two years. The commission asks for an investigation commission be sent to Cuba to examine human rights abuses. No one should be surprised that the United States is interested in this issue of human rights and that the Cubans have set up obstacles to the investigation of the United Nations."

4. Note: Today's dailies ran a wire service article "United Stated trusts that Latin American countries would support the resolution against Cuba in Geneva. End note.

Palmer